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Graduate students Aomi Katagiri, Floret Maame Owusu, and Nanami Jikuya participated in the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD9), held in Yokohama from Wednesday, August 20 to Friday, August 22.

During Aomi's visit to the Republic of Ghana, Floret's home country, in January 2024, Aomi witnessed the progress and challenges in maternal and child healthcare in Ghana, as well as the efforts surrounding the Maternal and Child Health Record Book, a program Japan has been central to supporting. Her account of this visit to Ghana and her reflections on the responsibility of high-income countries to support low- and middle-income countries were published in Asahi Shimbun's "with Planet".

Recognizing the critical importance of improving access to basic healthcare (primary healthcare) for children, especially in achieving the World Health Organization's (WHO) vision of a world where we "leave no one behind," Aomi founded NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children in February 2025.



Ahead of TICAD9, Aomi, Floret, and Nanami hosted the "One Cup, One Action" event at Sport for Tomorrow × Africa Action Day 2025, as part of the activities of NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children.

Sport for Tomorrow × Africa Action Day 2025 is one of TICAD9's partner projects, aiming to deepen bonds and increase awareness of Africa among the Japanese public through sports and culture. For this event, they applied knowledge gained from their lectures in the Master of Public Health in Global Health (MPH) course at Institute of Science Tokyo. They prepared quizzes based on Aomi's visit to Ghana, sold Ethiopian coffee beans, and offered a workshop to create original coffee drip packages to communicate the importance of environment-friendly coffee farming and fair trade.



As part of TICAD9, Bill Gates, Chair of the Gates Foundation visited Japan, hosting the event “Hope Begins with Health,” empowering global health. Aomi, who serves as the Executive Director of NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children, took the stage as a youth leader. She advocated for the necessity of a society where all children have access to primary healthcare without leaving anyone behind. To achieve this, she emphasized the importance of uniting and working together across borders and various fields to tackle the issue.



Additionally, during TICAD9, NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children hosted a 90-minute Thematic Event “Youth for Health Equity: Japan-Africa Dialogue.”

Together with Minister Manabu Sakai, Chair of the Japan-Ghana Parliamentary Friendship Association), and Chioma S. Nwachukwu, Head of Public Policy Engagement (Regional and Country) at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Aomi, and Floret participated in a panel discussion on the theme “Why is it necessary for Japan to engage in supporting third countries?” The discussion reaffirmed the importance of continuing foreign aid in the global health sector, as well as the importance to highlight the benefits Japan gains out of foreign aid cooperation.

Floret shared that Japanese aid has led to various improvements in Ghana's healthcare. She also touched upon the significant issue of brain drain among healthcare professionals in Ghana. She emphasized that this is not merely an issue of individual choice but a structural societal problem that requires an upstream approach.



At the opening ceremony of TICAD9, Prime Minister Ishiba announced Japan's contribution of up to 550 million USD to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance over the next five years. During one of the TICAD9 events, Aomi, Floret, and Nanami had the opportunity to speak directly with Gavi CEO Dr. Sania Nishtar, who expressed her gratitude for the advocacy efforts of NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children, which contributed to securing Japan's pledge. She also praised the organization's continued focus on the critical issue of zero-dose children.



Information on the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) is available here.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/af/af1/pagewe_000001_00053.html

NGO Reaching Zero-Dose Children website is here.

<https://www.reachingzdc.org/en/>

The Asahi Shimbun's with Planet article is available here.

<https://www.asahi.com/withplanet/article/15749284>

Details for the One Cup, One Action event are available here.

<https://www.reachingzdc.org/en/2025/08/14/8%e6%9c%882%e6%97%a5%ef%bc%88%e5%9c%9f%ef%bc%89one-cup-one-action%e3%82%a4%e3%83%99%e3%83%b3%e3%83%88%e3%82%92%e9%96%8b%e5%82%ac%e3%81%97%e3%81%be%e3%81%97%e3%81%9f/>

Details for the Gates Foundation's “Hope Begins with Health” event are available here.
<https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000008.000129554.html>

Details for the thematic events of the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) are available here.

<https://www.reachingzdc.org/en/2025/08/30/%e3%80%90-21%e6%9c%a8%e9%96%8b%e5%82%ac%e5%a0%b1%e5%91%8a%e3%80%91ticad-9-%e3%83%86%e3%83%bc%e3%83%9e%e5%88%a5%e3%82%a4%e3%83%99%e3%83%b3%e3%83%88%e3%80%8c%e6%9c%aa%e6%9d%a5%e3%82%92%e3%81%a4/>

Details for meeting Gavi CEO Dr. Sania Nishtar are available here.

<https://www.reachingzdc.org/en/2025/08/30/%e6%97%a5%e6%9c%ac%e6%94%bf%e5%ba%9c%e3%81%8cgavi%e5%a2%97%e8%b3%87%e3%81%ab5-5%e5%84%84%e7%b1%b3%e3%83%89%e3%83%ab%e3%81%ae%e6%8b%a0%e5%87%ba%e8%a1%a8%e6%98%8e%e2%80%95%e5%bd%93%e5%9b%a3%e4%bd%93/>